### What does an Indian Look Like

Celebrated land of diversity,
Tourist brochures, colourful and vibrant.
Rich hues, striking costumes,
Interesting faces—a veritable Benetton ad.
Differences, in theory, are appreciated;
Make a good topic for the politicians' speech.
Are we as proud of our unity
As we are of our diversity?

The 'largest democracy in the world'.
Sounds good on paper; not too good
For those who, in a land that professes
To deny the presence of a mainstream,
Still has little rivulets and brooks
Furiously trying to keep pace with the river,
Sidelined, side-tracked, side-stepped,
A minority in a majority world.

You look at me, and you see
My eyes, my skin, my language, my faith.
You dissect my past, analyse my present
Predict my future and build my profile.
I am a curiosity, an 'ethnic' specimen.
Politics, history, anthropology, your impressive learning,
All unable to answer the fundamental question—
'What does an Indian look like?'
—An Indian looks like me, an Indian is Me.

## Lalrinmawii Khiangte

### Betrayal

Warm tears freeze into icicles at the 'injustice'
The heart of flesh turns into stone at the 'betrayal'.
Traitor! Heart of Judas! Betrayer!
Away with you—do not pollute me thus!
What was once lovely, clean, sweet and pure
Like discarded empty beer tin canisters